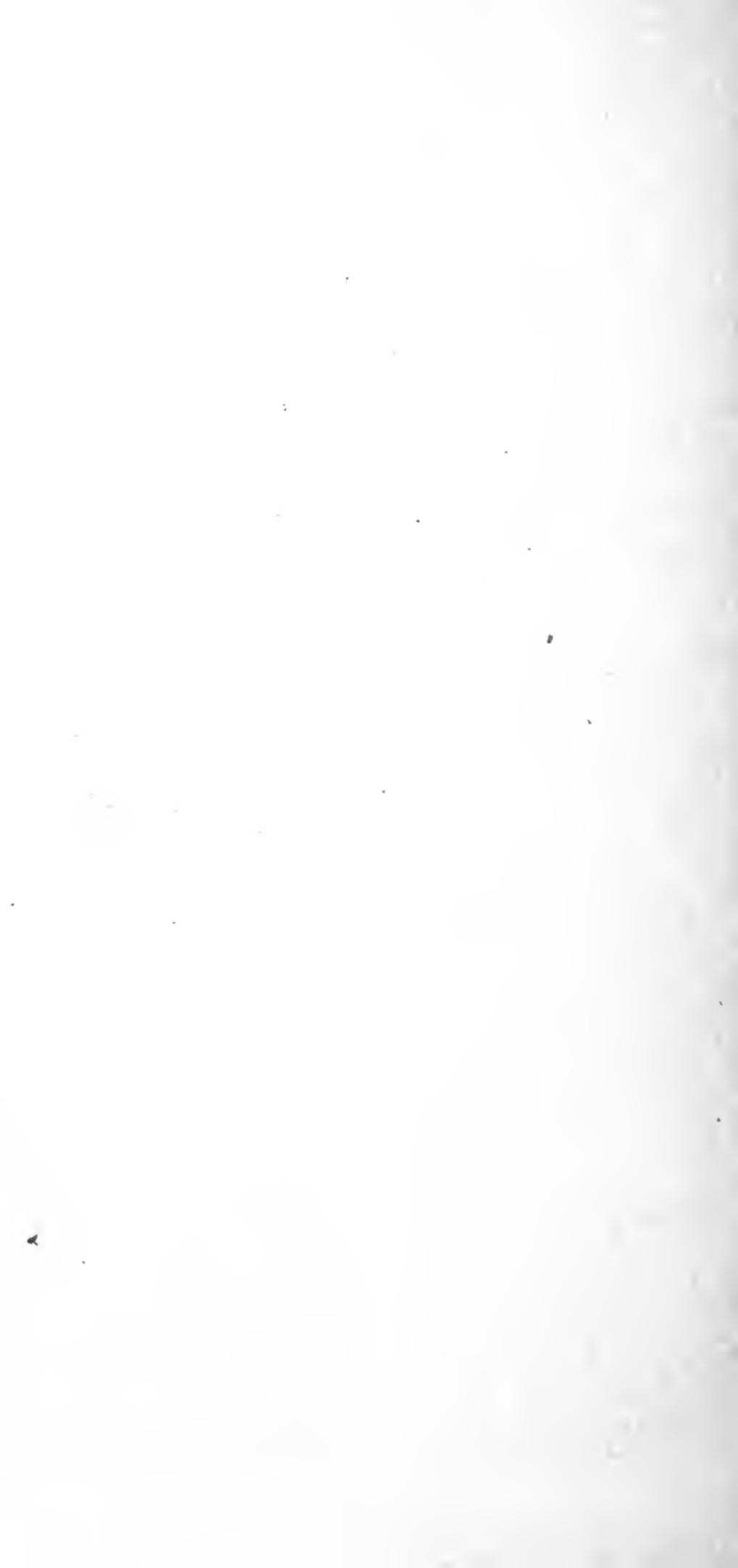


M 2537



ABRAHAM LINCOLN

A TRIBUTE BY
JAMES E. WATSON
OF INDIANA



ABRAHAM
LINCOLN

A B R A H A M L I N C O L N

IN a log hut Abraham Lincoln was born. Yet because of what he was and what he did, that rude cabin has been transformed by the tender imagination of the people into a mansion more stately than any of the palaces of earth.

I care not how deep the poverty; I care not how fierce the struggle; if love abound in the home; if greed of knowledge be ingrained in the mind; if thoughts of God and lessons of morality be early impressed upon the soul; if ruggedness of character be developed by contact with the eternal hills; if a sense of freedom be instilled into the being by the very vastness and solitude of nature; if, then, some righteous cause shall touch and thrill the heart and engage the regnant mind and urge the whole man onward to the accomplishment of the sacred task, success and

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even glory will surely crown the final end.

Abraham Lincoln was born in poverty; that healthful poverty that stimulates to action; that sets a ladder for ambition; that gives wing to inborn hope.

Where got he that giant frame that enabled him to endure the ceaseless toil of the succeeding years unwearied and unworn? By rough and rugged labor on the uninviting farm and in the primeval woods.

Where got he that beautiful and tender sympathy that shone like a star amidst the dark and surcharged clouds of war, that at times overrode the decrees of the cabinet and the wishes of Congress? By daily contact with the struggling poor, feeling their every sorrow and knowing their every want and comprehending unexpressed yearnings of their simple hearts.

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Where got he that unfailing knowledge of men and human nature so invaluable to him in dealing with the vast and complex problems of his career? By daily life among the common folk of Kentucky and Indiana and Illinois; in the woods, on the farm, on the flat-boat, in the militia, in the legislature; before courts and juries, dealing with the ordinary affairs of life, sensing their love of fair play; and being ever conscious of the all-prevailing desire among men to love mercy, to vindicate truth and to see the reign of justice among their fellowman.

Where got he that mastery of words, that incomparable charm of utterance that produced his second inaugural and his address at Gettysburg, cited in the universities of England as two of the four examples of pure English America has ever

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produced? By reading the matchless language of the Holy Bible, the simple words of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, the undarned utterances of Aesop's Fables, and by ever abiding in the atmosphere of immortal Shakespeare; familiarizing himself with those incomparable authors, by spending every spare moment in perusing their pages, and even by the flickering light of the fireplace and the tallow-dip abating not his toil; expressing his sentiments by writing them with charcoal on the backs of shovels, and on the sides of logs, and on the smooth surfaces of the chips produced by the stroke of his mighty axe.

Where got he that quaint humor that so often enabled him by apt anecdote and homely illustration to parry the thrust of his political antagonist; to pierce the

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thin disguise of the demagogue; to ward off the discontented who descended upon him in swarms to instruct him how to manage the affairs of the government? By contact with the plain people, by understanding human nature, by simple observation of his fellow-men; by remembering always that "a soft answer turneth away wrath"; thus acquiring that infinite tact that was so indispensable to him in the midst of the turbulence and turmoil of war.

Where got he that unfailing patience, that supreme kindness of nature and conduct that never deserted him, no matter how infinite the complexities of the problems that he faced; so that he stood calm and serene and self-poised in the midst of an endless confusion of tongues, and indescribable chaos of opinion and assertion,

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and an unutterable despair that at times seemed to seize everyone that stood for the Union of the States? By an unfaltering trust in Almighty God, whose "still, small voice" he ever heard speaking to his soul as of old He had spoken to the prophets of His chosen people.

Child of the cabin, be not discouraged; for Abraham Lincoln was born there too! Rustic lad of the hills, be not overcome with your lot; for the Savior of the nation was reared there too!

Wearied searcher after knowledge, be not dismayed with your struggle; for the Emancipator of a race trod that path too!





